

THE LEISURE HOUR.

BEHOLD IN THESE WHAT LEISURE HOURS DEMAND,
AMUSEMENT AND TRUE KNOWLEDGE HAND IN HAND.—*Comper.*



DECISIVE PROOF.

IDONEA.

CHAPTER XLIII.

Trifles make the sum of human bliss.

—*Hannah More.*

"MOTHER, how well you look! Children, how rosy you are!" were Percy's first exclamations when the excitement of the meeting subsided. "You are younger than when I saw you last, mother,

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and are not half as grey as I am; and as to Margery and Belle, I shouldn't have known them; and the boys will soon be as tall as I."

The little housekeepers were whispering together, and Percy caught the word "breakfast."

"If I might only have one of those basins of porridge. I am as hungry as a Cheviot shepherd," Le said, putting an arm round his twin sisters.

"You shall have mine—No, mine—Mine—Mine!" shouted the four joyous children.

PRICE ONE PENNY.

"I believe I could empty them all," laughed Percy, and in a few moments he was disencumbered of his top-coat and seated in front of the basins, which were pushed to the head of the table amid a burst of merriment.

Percy, who had not eaten with appetite for many weeks, began at once upon the nearest basin, and found that "the appetite came with eating." "It is the native air," he said, while the twins, in all the fuss of juvenile importance, disappeared.

Meanwhile the mother was powerless to act, and sat gazing at her son as if at something unreal; but when at last she recovered herself and they sat down to breakfast, questions and answers were rapid as the thoughts that bred them. Percy replied to them as well as his secret-burdened mind would let him; but when Belle suddenly abstracted his basin and replaced it by one filled with a "Joseph's mess," fresh from the saucepan, he declared that he must "keep his breath to cool his porridge," and would answer no more questions until he had satisfied his hunger.

Miss Stiffens would not have recognised her grave, abstracted, wearied curate in the gay, animated Percy. The simple sayings and jests of years gone by returned to him as if by magic, and he became, as he said, a boy again. He even forgot his anxiety concerning Clarina in the happiness of being once more surrounded by his own kith and kin. "Poverty is endurable when accompanied by the blessings of health, and when the family ties are unsevered by the destroying angel," he thought.

When breakfast was over the boys started for school. He asked for a holiday, but Walter declined, much to Bertram's annoyance, because the examinations had begun, and he hoped for a prize. Then the twins cleared away the breakfast-things, and Mrs. Umfreville bestirred herself to make Percy comfortable. She had soon prepared Idonea's little room for him, and preceded him thither, followed by the twins, each with a huge jug of hot water in her hand.

"It is so cold and he has come from so far that we thought you would let him have it hot, mother, and Becky made it boil as hard as ever she could," they pleaded, for to wash in warm water was a luxury unknown to the family.

"He shall do just as he likes now that he has come home, my darlings. I wonder you are not scalded to death," said Mrs. Umfreville, putting her hand against the burning jugs.

"Oh, mother! we are so glad. We love him so dearly we will work all day for him," they cried.

In proof of which they ran down to the hall, and returned lugging his portmanteau between them. He was soon after them, and repaid them by his appreciation of the boiling water. Indeed, he was in such spirits that he would have appreciated anything.

All this sounds trivial, doubtless, but "trifles make the sum of human bliss," and these trivialities were rest and joy to him. All that the world has to give is worth less than such happiness. Homely as it was, it was paradise after his solitary lodging.

When he went downstairs again he found a blazing fire in the sitting-room, and his mother and sisters putting away lesson-books, and arranging the well-worn furniture as picturesquely as they could.

"You are all the fashion, mother," he said, rubbing his hands before the fire. "Everything *de*

rigueur. Green walls, oaken panels, carved mahogany furniture, antiquated chair-covers, worked, I do believe, in the very stitch of the mode, and a carpet of no particular colour. Is it *eau de Nile*?"

"Doe calls it the 'sage,' because it keeps a non-descript green and lasts for ever," said Margery. "I wish Doe were here."

"Nothing perfect; always something to wish for!" said Percy, as the twins planted themselves on either side of him, and he drew them lovingly towards him, rather as if he were their father than their brother, while Mrs. Umfreville turned aside to brush off a tear.

Trifles again! But one loves to linger where the sunshine has penetrated the gloom; and there is, after all, more poetry in the repose of the widow and her children in that old Border town than in the unrest of the great world.

When the children left the room, at a hint from their mother, she had a long conversation with her son. She had never concealed anything from him, and he drew from her that she scarcely knew how to pay her way till Christmas, when her very small half-yearly income was due. He placed the rector's ten-pound note in her hand, saying casually that he had travelled third class, and could spare it.

"Third class!" exclaimed Mrs. Umfreville, contemplating the note with more of chagrin than gratitude. "Oh, Percy! are we reduced to this? Idonea made the first step downwards by travelling second class to second-rate people."

"Parsons must do what parsons can, mother; and curates may be poor but must not be proud," said Percy, with a laugh. "How and when can I get to Heronshill?"

"Not at present, for Bertram says they are snowed up. Third class! We are, indeed, sunk low. It is true, then, that money, and not family or intellect, rules the world. The Dooners travel first class, you third."

Percy felt all the sarcasm of these words, but he lived in the present, she in the past. Still he admired and loved the stately, aristocratic, handsome mother, whose pride nothing could subdue; and she also loved and admired him, despite this his degeneracy. To see them, they might have been brother and sister, for, as Percy said, in grey hairs he was the senior.

Yet was he still a boy, for if the ten-pound note had, as they say, burnt in his pocket, until his mother had possession of it, Mrs. Somerville's box of "boxes" burnt in his room. He felt that if it remained there until Christmas-day both he and it would be consumed. So, after the happiest day he had passed for three years, he made up his mind that there was nothing like the present time, and when tea was over, and they were all seated round an unusually large parlour fire, he suddenly disappeared from between the twins, and returned with the, as yet, unconsumed box, which he placed upon the table.

"Now, who is the mechanic, and has a box of tools?" he inquired.

Walter produced the required articles in no time.

"He made them all himself. Walter can make everything. Steam-engines, and bridges, and mills, and boats, and rain-gauges, and he can mend the furniture and put in panes of glass, and draw plans and arches, and—" cried the twins by turns.

"Stop!" interrupted Walter, authoritatively;

"you girls know nothing about it, and mother doesn't care about such things."

"Oh! but she does, though, when she gets her windows mended for nothing," cried Bertram.

"If Walter is such a skilful workman, let him open the box," said Percy, "and let mother unpack what Mrs. Somerville has sent."

What an eager, pretty group it was! Mrs. Umfreville, with a boy on either side, at one end of the table; Percy, the small hand of a fair-haired girl in each arm, on the other; the box between. And who shall write the joyous exclamations of delighted admiration that ensued, when handsome books, scientific and amusing instruments and games, workboxes and ornaments, were removed, one by one, from their case, and placed on the table, or who describe the faces of the mother and her children?

"If Idonea were but here it would be perfect!" was the general thought and cry.

And in the midst of the hubbub and excitement the postman's knock sounded, and Becky brought in the letter.

"Such presents, Becky! And one for you," greeted her from the ready Bertram.

"May she have this, mother, for we both have workboxes?" asked Margery, pointing to a small rosewood workbox.

"I am sure she may," rejoined Percy, taking up the box, and there and then presenting it to Becky, whose faithful if sleepy service well deserved it.

"From Idonea!" said Mrs. Umfreville, taking the letter.

"Hurrah! *Doe, re, mi, fa!*" shouted Bertram, as he and the rest crowded round their mother to hear Idonea's first foreign letter, forgetful of the presents.

CHAPTER XLIV.

All precious things, discovered late,
To those that seek them issue forth;
For love in sequel works with fate,
And draws the veil from hidden worth.

—Tennyson.

WHILE the events narrated in the last chapters were happening, Neville Fairborn was detained at Heronshill, whether he would or no, and although he could bear solitude as well as most men, he kicked against inaction. Still, he was wise enough to attend to his doctor's advice, and to remain where he was until his fractured arm was well. He was not, however, long a prisoner to the house. He was abroad again in a week or so, with his arm in a sling and his dogs at his heels. In spite of Mr. Timmins's conscientious stewardship, he found that his absenteeism had not been beneficial either to himself or his tenants. To procure the sums of money he had lavished on the London poor in his search for his sister, Mr. Timmins had occasionally pressed rather hard upon the Northumbrian poor, and he found his people, who had been accustomed to have matters much as they liked, discontented with a just deputy. Neville was clear-sighted, and humbly laid the fault at his own door. He became conscious that in pursuing one object, however reasonable, others must not be neglected, and that your true philanthropist must look at home as well as abroad. His wanderings had sharpened his wits, and he began to perceive that although books were good friends men were better. His own experience had taught him more than the experience of his predecessors, and although it was

not with him as with Dr. Johnson, "Fleet Street, sir," but "The Strand, sir," that had been his mentor, he had gathered wisdom none the less.

All his sympathies had been aroused by the poverty and vice of the great city, and he discovered enough to keep them awake immediately surrounding him. If only he had found his sister, he thought he might again settle down at Heronshill, but still he felt lonely. He even missed Mrs. Keene, and was continually wondering what she had done with Madame Ronda; wondering, also, what Percy was about, and even what the Dooners were doing, and whether Sir Richard would, after all, marry Charlotte. Thinking of the Dooners naturally recalled Idonea; but he always banished her from his mind with a grim resolution, and the unspoken words, "If she were as simple and pure a girl as I thought her, she would not have encouraged Sir Richard, or even contemplated a marriage with that coxcomb, Duke."

Snow had fallen unusually early, and some weeks before Christmas Neville found himself almost snowed up. The frost brought pain to his splintered arm, and made him irritable, a frame of mind he scarcely understood, for he was rather morose than quick-tempered by nature. One afternoon, after a vain attempt to get through the snowstorm, he was seated by his library fire, a book in his hand, and his dogs at his feet. Outside, the air was thick with snowflakes, and he was compelled to turn his book towards the clear flames proceeding from Heronshill logs and Newcastle coal, in order to pursue his studies. But these were broken by restless thoughts, and not the most dogged resolution could rivet them to the type on which his eyes were turned. At last he laid down the book, exclaiming, "What has come to me?" and glanced round the room with a sort of discontented wonder at its comfort and brightness. "What right have I, a solitary, unloved, and unlovable being, to be so well off, when others are starving?" he thought.

His eyes fell on the group of Graces, which, with some unaccountable inconsistency, he had removed from their hiding-place and stationed on the library table, just where he had seen them when he found Idonea and Lina turning out his cupboards. By a not unnatural transition, his thoughts reverted to that particular incident, and then to his accident. Here, again, Idonea naturally thrust herself in, and he remembered how pale she looked when she came to the Lodge, and how confidently Chevy had surrendered himself to be led by her.

"No woman shall ever so lead me," was his mental resolve. "I have seen too much in this house already of female influence. Still, I wish Mrs. Umfreville and her family were better off, and that I could do anything for them."

Mr. Timmins had told him only the day before that he scarcely knew how the widow and her children got on at all, though she was too proud to make even a complaint.

"And this within twenty miles of me, and I cannot redress it," he reflected. "How can one wonder that both mother and daughter should accept the proposal of a rich man when they are reduced to such straits? If she would let me educate that clever Bertram I should be glad. I must consult Percy; but even he is failing me. His last letter was very concise and unsatisfactory."

These lucubrations were suddenly brought to a close by the hasty entrance of Jerry, with the infor-

mation that the shepherd had just come with the news that some vehicle was snowbound about half a mile off, and that neither horse nor driver could move an inch. Neville was instantly on the alert, and ordered that the dog-cart should be dispatched with men and shovels to release the prisoners, and bring them to the house, if necessary. But for his disabled arm he would have driven himself; as it was, he put on his overalls and mackintosh, and walked off in the direction of the wayfarers.

He had been accustomed to this sort of adventures all his life, a winter never passing without the hospitality of Heronshill being taxed by the snow with unexpected guests. He had not fancied it so deep as it was, but the snow-posts on either side of the road showed that more had fallen than he had imagined. These posts were placed not only to mark the depth of the snow but to warn from the ditches that here and there flanked the way when the Lodge was passed.

Glad of any excitement that drew him out of himself, Neville toiled on, sometimes knee-deep, the earth's white winding-sheet beneath and her heavy white canopy above. Nothing but snow to be seen over the moors, save here and there a post and tree-trunk. He was, however, arrested by the appearance of something scarlet, and was suddenly addressed by Jerry with—

"All right, master; you'd better come home."

Jerry was in the dog-cart and had a woman by his side. He stopped, but Neville declined to mount, telling him to drive on as fast as he could.

"There's a good fire in the library," he shouted, as Jerry pursued his way, and the bit of red vanished.

He walked on until he reached the place where his men were shovelling away the snow from the wheel of a fly that had apparently sunk into a rut and was nearly overturned. The driver was engaged with his horse, and told Neville that he had brought a lady from Warkworth who was going to Heronshill, and who had arrived by train. He believed she was nearly frozen to death, but it was not his fault, as he had told her of the deep snow, but she had said that it was important she should proceed, and that she was not afraid. They had helped her out of the fly, more dead than alive, and Jerry had driven her off at once. Although Neville was not surprised at the stoppage of the vehicle, he was much astonished that any lady should be on her way to Heronshill, and he wondered who it could be.

He was about to retrace his steps when the men succeeded in extricating the fly and setting it on its wheels again.

"I suppose I had better go back, sir?" said the driver.

"Certainly not. You must be so good as to drive us all to Heronshill," replied Neville. "Bill, get up on the box and show him the way. You two must come inside."

The men obeyed, and they returned, slowly and carefully, to the house. It was certainly the longest half mile that Neville had ever traversed, and his mind ran riot in conjectures as to his guest.

When he reached home his housekeeper met him with the intelligence that the person whom Jerry had brought was in the library, according to his orders, but that she positively declined refreshment.

"She says, sir, that she is only cold, and that the warmth of the fire is all she needs. But she shivers

from head to foot, and keeps her veil down, which is all ice. Perhaps you will see what you can do with her."

Mrs. Heatherton, the housekeeper, who had been at Heronshill as long as Neville could remember, helped him off with his mackintosh and leggings, while he ordered tea and refreshments to be ready against he rang for them. The pulsations of his heart quickened, he scarcely knew how or why, as he entered the library nervously. There, by the blazing fire sat the veiled figure, her feet on the fender, her head turned towards the door. She made an effort to rise, but could not.

"You—you will be much surprised," she stammered, as he approached her.

She threw up her veil, and he recognised—Madame Ronda.

He was, indeed, surprised and disappointed. His face and voice expressed it.

"Madame Ronda!" he exclaimed. "I understood you were ill in London."

"I was, but you have cured me," she replied. "I have come to return you my grateful thanks for your goodness to me."

"I—I—am much obliged to you for taking so much trouble; but I am quite unworthy of it," said Neville, embarrassed and annoyed. "Have you travelled from London on so unnecessary an errand?"

"Yes. I wished to see my benefactor face to face. I know all. You have saved my life."

Neville was almost inclined to wish that he had not been so fortunate, since the result was so perplexing; but since she had made so ridiculous a journey for so insignificant a cause he could do no less than be polite.

"I am glad you are better, though you still look far from recovered," he said. "This cold is too severe for an invalid. I will call my housekeeper, and she will see that you are properly attended to."

Neville's hand was on the bell, but she exclaimed, "Don't ring, I entreat you. It is you that I came to see. I have much to say. Let me rest a few moments and I shall have recovered force to say it. The warmth revives me, and I—I shall be myself soon."

She covered her face with her hands and leaned over the fire. He looked from her bent figure round the room, in a sort of desperate hope that somebody would come in and relieve him from this strange embarrassment. He perceived that she was faint. There was a decanter of water on the table, to which she pointed. Filling a glass, he took it up and carried it to his visitor, saying with decision,

"I must beg you to rest yourself, Madame Ronda. Since you come so far, unnecessarily, to see me, you must not over-exert yourself."

She looked up earnestly at him, took the glass, and drank the water.

"Thank you; he is like my father," she said, and the glass fell from her hand and was broken.

"Pray don't mind," said perplexed Neville, when she suddenly burst into tears, so overwhelming and prolonged, that his hand went once more to the bell.

Again she entreated him, in broken sentences, not to ring, and Neville, feeling that there must be more beneath this emotion than he could understand, sat down near the table with his back towards her, and nervously turned over a book while she exhausted it. She grew calm by degrees, and glancing round and

perceiving that he was not looking at her she clasped her hands, uplifted her eyes, and asked for strength to tell her tale. His figure reminded her of one who had, years before, sat at that same table in that familiar room, one whom she had dearly loved and grievously offended.

She began to speak quietly, and he, fearing to renew her agitation, listened, while he still continued to finger the leaves of his book with his left hand.

"It was through Mr. Umfreville that I discovered who my benefactor was, and that only after I had heard from his sister that she was staying at this place, which I once knew."

Neville glanced round, surprised, but her back was still towards him. She continued, very slowly and faintly,

"I made inquiries concerning the owner of Herons-hill, and was told that he was in search of a sister, who—who had left her home many years ago in passionate resentment at some imaginary disgrace, and who, in spite of inquiries made at the time, had never been heard of since. Is this so?"

"Yes," replied Neville, now turning wholly towards her, while she remained in the same position.

"Mr. Umfreville gave me to understand that since the death of—of your mother you had met with a letter, or letters, from this sister to your father, entreating forgiveness and permission to return home. Is that also true?"

"It is, but why do you ask?" said Neville.

"Because I—I know that sister. Wait till you hear all," she continued, as Neville rose, and reseated himself at her desire. "She was passionate, but not revengeful, and, when her anger at malicious words cooled, she wrote many letters to her father, praying for pardon; but receiving no answer, the demon in her nature prevailed, and she resolved never again to trouble those—who—no longer cared—for her."

Here a suppressed sob interrupted her speech, but she resumed before Neville's "Where is she now?" was articulated.

"When she left Mrs. Keene's tender and motherly care, it was to go abroad with a schoolfellow—who was no true friend—and to remain away from England for some years. She heard of her dear father's death, and had—no tie at home—for she fancied that her—young brother disliked her, and would believe the slanderous words said against her."

"She was mistaken," broke in Neville.

"So Mr. Umfreville says," continued Madame Ronda, with an effort at composure. "I think I know your sister's faults—her hot temper, pride, resentment of suspicion, and, above all, her dislike of a stepmother. Had your mother been an angel, she would still have hated her in that relation. But—she loved her father dearly—she was jealous of any rival in his affections—indeed—I think—I hope—she was not naturally bad—only impulsive—wild, and untrained as the mountain winds."

"Where did you see her? Where is she?" cried Neville, breaking through her restrictions, rising from his seat, and standing at her side.

"If I tell you, will you receive her—ignoring her faults and past history—believing that all these weary years she has been pining for home and friends, though too proud to seek them—till illness brought her near the grave—will you welcome her home for her father's sake?"

"I will—I will. For his sake, for hers, for mine,"

said Neville, in much agitation. "Only tell me where she is, that I may go to her and assure her of a brother's affection, and that his home is also hers."

Madame Ronda turned her white face towards Neville.

"She is here. I am your sister. I am Clarina," she said.

These words, uttered in a low, doubtful voice, had a strangely bewildering effect on Neville. He neither understood nor believed them. There was no trace of the sister he remembered in her who claimed to be that sister; and for the moment he drew back irresolute, as if an impostor were before him. He was always slow to display his feelings, and although his heart was full, he could not pour them out.

"You! my sister!" he said, after a pause, and his manner showed the unbelief he felt.

"You doubt me. I do not wonder, for there is no trace of the old Clarina left," she said, humbly. "But perhaps these books, which were once objects of jealousy to me because you loved them better than you loved me, may prove my words. If not, I can recall many a scene that you must remember as well as I do."

She rose and walked slowly towards a particular corner of the room in which, as Neville knew, were books much prized by his father. He followed her as if in a dream. She took from one of the shelves a volume with a crimson leather back, and put it, unopened, into Neville's hand.

"It is still in the old place," she said, tears for the first time springing to her eyes; then, seeing that he could not turn the cover on account of his disabled hand, she added, "I gave it to *him*," and opened it at the title-page.

"From Clarina to her darling father" was inscribed thereon.

"You believe me now, my brother?" she said.

"I do," he replied.

"And you forgive me?"

"I have nothing to forgive."

"In my father's name, then—and, in your mother's. I come home to ask forgiveness of them through you."

"Clarina!" he said at last, holding out his hand. She clasped it in both hers, which were so cold that he almost started at her touch. "Sister!" he added, and at the familiar word she threw her arms round his neck, and gave way to her ill-restrained emotion.

He was also so much moved and excited that he was unable to speak for some time. At last he led her back to her seat by the fire, being conscious that she was cold as ice, and said,

"Thank God that you have come home, Clarina. Forget the past and think only of the present joy. But it has been too much for you. Let me call your old friend Heatherton, who will rejoice with us."

She did not remonstrate, and he summoned the housekeeper.

"Heatherton, it is Clarina!" was all he could say.

A few words sufficed to enlighten the astonished housekeeper, who had been much attached to the wild, impetuous young girl who had left her home so unaccountably.

"God be thanked, my bonnie darling!" she said, forgetting the intervening years, and receiving her into her arms as if she were the Clarina of old.

The Northern tongue and motherly words com-

pletely opened the wanderer's heart, and the tears, hitherto partly restrained, fell fast.

"We shall never need to leave you again now, Heatherton," said Neville, in a husky voice.

"Let me take off your damp clothes, my lamb. Order a fire to be kindled in her room, Master Neville. Ring for hot water; she has come in just as she always did, half frozen with the cold."

And before the night was over Clarina was reinstated in her old home, and not a question was put, or allusion made, to her past history.

HUON OF BORDEAUX.

IN an article on the "Chanson de Roland" we described it (L. H., 1877, p. 618) as the principal among a long list of metrical romances generally known by the name of "Chansons de Geste," and intended to celebrate the high deeds of the Emperor Charlemagne and his valiant companions in arms. Next to these compositions another class of poems may be mentioned, not written at the same early period, but still sufficiently ancient to have preserved many curious traces of historic truth. These romances, however, are not essentially connected with the life of Charlemagne, and it is very probable that, in the shape they first assumed, they had nothing to do with him. But the anxiety of rhapsodists to secure popularity for certain tales, by making them to gather around the biography of the great emperor, induced them to give these romances what we may call *un air de famille*. Amongst them we would select for special examination Huon of Bordeaux. Weber's beautiful music and Wieland's celebrated poem have contributed to extend the popularity of that work, which is certainly one of the most remarkable specimens of the "Chansons de Geste," belonging to an epoch when the influence of the Round-Table legends was beginning to be felt in French mediæval literature. Generally speaking, the class of tales under consideration, which were either entirely imaginative or new mouldings of the original "chansons," are distinguished by their intense silliness and the wretched nature of the story, to say nothing of a style which no quality recommends to the reader. A few, however, and Huon of Bordeaux especially, are, from the literary point of view, extremely noteworthy. We see in them the monuments of an age when intellectual culture had made considerable progress; and if we lack the picturesque energy of the old Cantilènes, we have, by way of compensation, taste, and a curious amount of gracefulness. A short summary of the "romaunt" of Huon will give us an idea of the rest.

Séguin, Duke of Bordeaux, died, leaving behind him two sons, Huon and Gérard. These young men had not yet done homage to Charlemagne for the province over which they ruled, when a traitor, Amaury de la Tour de Rivier, who coveted their inheritance, accused them of rebellion before the emperor. At that time Charlemagne, bowed down by age, was preparing to abdicate in favour of his son Charles. He could not, however, think of descending from his throne until he had seen his power firmly established throughout the length and breadth of the empire. He prepared, therefore, to resist the two sons of Duke Séguin; but Naimes, Duke of

Bavaria, their uncle, had pleaded their cause with the monarch, and insisted upon their not being condemned unheard. Huon and Gérard were accordingly summoned to Paris, and they had nearly reached the walls of the city when they fell into an ambush laid for their destruction by Amaury, who had succeeded in making of Charles, the emperor's son, his accomplice and his tool. Charles wounded Gérard seriously, but was in his turn killed by Huon. This was an excellent opportunity for the traitor to satisfy his hatred. He allowed Huon to finish his journey, but followed him with the dead body of the young prince. Arriving at the palace when the Duke of Bordeaux was standing in the midst of the courtiers, "Here is your son," exclaimed he, pointing out the corpse; "and there is his murderer," added he, advancing towards Huon.

Charlemagne's anger, it need scarcely be said, was equal to his grief. He began by insisting upon the death of Huon, who, after all, had merely avenged himself on a traitor. He would even have killed with his own hand the unfortunate young man, had not Duke Naimes interposed. Finally, however, abandoned by his peers, whose entreaties and prayers he had refused to hear, the emperor consented to forgive Huon, but only on condition that he would undertake a foreign mission of so strange, so perilous a character, that it seemed nothing short of a fresh condemnation to death. Huon consented; and then began a series of adventures through which it would have been impossible for him to find his way successfully, notwithstanding all his daring and his rashness, had he not been assisted by Oberon, the king of Fairyland. Thanks to this supernatural aid, the Duke of Bordeaux managed to accomplish the high deeds intended as an expiation of his supposed crime, and nothing remained apparently for him but to give to Charlemagne an account of his exploits. At this stage, however, a new act of treachery on the part of Huon's brother, Gérard, prevented him once more from entering into the possession of his inheritance, and led to a fresh series of wars and difficulties; but Oberon again came to the rescue of his friend, reconciled him ultimately with the emperor, obtained for him the restitution of his dukedom, and promised to abdicate on his behalf, at the end of three years, the realms of Fairyland.

Such is, briefly, the plot of the "Chanson de Geste," composed about the end of the twelfth century by some unknown *trouvère* on the subject of Huon of Bordeaux. We see at once how utterly unhistorical it is in its character, and how different, by the complex nature of the plot, from the simplicity and grandeur of the "Chanson de Roland." The introduction of the supernatural element in the shape of the dwarf Oberon, king of Fairyland, is also an incident which deserves to be mentioned, because it shows that the poem was composed at a date when Celtic legends, with all their *cortège* of enchanters and magicians, had begun to place their stamp upon French literature in the romances of Chretien de Troyes. M. de la Villemarque appears to have proved, very ingeniously and very conclusively, the Celtic origin of the name and individuality of Oberon. In Welsh mythology we find a dwarf with the name of Gwyn-Araun or Gwenn-Aron. Now "Gwyn" or "Gwenn" means white, and corresponds, therefore, to the French *aube*, derived from the Latin *albus*. The word "aron" or "araun" implies superiority, and indicates the

supernatural power of the dwarf. In his work entitled "Shakespeare and his Times," Mr. Nathan Drake had already noticed, forty years ago, the right etymology of the name Oberon. "Oberon," said he, "or, more properly, 'Auberon,' has been derived by some antiquaries from 'l'aube du jour.'" The correspondence, we may further remark, is not merely one of names. Gwyn-araun issued, the Celtic traditions tell us, like a flash of lightning from a cloud, and was brought up by the queen of the fairies, Morgan. In like manner, Auberon is the son of the fairy Morgan, or Morgana; but the French *trouvère*, in his eagerness to shed additional lustre upon the dwarf, gives him Julius Cæsar as his father. Gwyn was invoked, in the old Welsh poems, as a powerful chieftain, before whom entire battalions fell down more swiftly than reeds mown by the scythe. In Huon of Bordeaux, Auberon has exactly the same character. He won innumerable victories, and summoned forth at pleasure countless legions of soldiers. Notwithstanding this extraordinary power, Gwyn has not a warlike appearance—quite the reverse. He is not three feet tall, he is frail and delicate-looking, and were it not for the bugle which hangs from his neck, he might easily be mistaken for a pretty little girl four or five years old. This description tallies exactly with that of Auberon. Lastly, we may notice in the Celtic legend an account of a magic banquet conjured up in a minute by the king of the fairies. Auberon's palace, too, rises up by enchantment, a richly-spread table appears, no one knows how, and the goblets get spontaneously replenished at the will of the guests.

In order to be strictly impartial, we must now state that the Teutonic origin of Auberon's history has been defended with much talent by several critics. Auberon, according to them, is none else but the Alberich or Elberich of the old German poems. Alberich plays an important part in the *Nibelungen*; he is the leader of the dwarfs who watch over the treasure conquered by Sigifrid, and his distinctive attribute is a cape, enabling him to be invisible at pleasure. One of the branches or subdivisions of the famous "*Heldenbuch*" introduces him as king of the dwarfs; he dwells on Mount Caucasus, and it is he who trains Wieland (the Wayland of the English ballad) to be a smith. In a second branch of the same poem ("*Sigenot*") a dwarf, pretending to be the son of King Albrecht, bestows upon the hero a precious stone, which has the property of satisfying his hunger when he has been long fasting, and his thirst when he can procure nothing to drink. In a third romance ("*Laurin*") the king of the dwarfs appears at the head of sixty thousand warriors, whom he renders invisible. His name is Walberan, a form very near that of Auberon, and German critics have no hesitation about the identity of Walberan and Alberich. It is, however, in the poem of "Otnit" that the king of the dwarfs appears with special advantage; he waits constantly upon the hero, provides him with a magic suit of armour, and enables him to conquer the fair daughter of a heathen king.

Whether our readers are inclined to accept the Teutonic parentage of Auberon, or rather to vote for the Celtic origin, it remains quite certain that the "*Chanson de Geste*" of Huon of Bordeaux was one of the most popular amongst the rich harvest of metrical romances which clustered around the name of Charlemagne. To mention only the English

translations or adaptations of it, we have Sir John Bouchier Lord Berners publishing a version at the particular request of the Earl of Huntingdon; it is entitled, in Bliss's catalogue, "*Huon of Burdeaux*—Here begynneth the boke of Duke Huon of Burdeaux, and of them that issued fro hym." Robert Greene's "*Scottish Storie* (tragedy) of James iv," printed in 1598, is "intermixed with a pleasant comédie by Oberon, king of Fayeries;" we need scarcely allude to the use made of Auberon by Shakespeare ("*Midsummer Night's Dream*"), Spenser ("*Fairy Queen*," Book II, canto 10), Ben Jonson ("*Oberon, the Fairy Prince*," a masque), and Drayton ("*Nymphidia, the court of fairy*").

Before taking a final leave of our subject, we must refer to the grouping of the "*Chanson de Geste*" around the "*Chanson de Roland*." There had always been a strong tendency on the part of the *trouvères* to create, if we may so say, families exclusively commissioned or predestinated to accomplish certain deeds of prowess, or to exhibit certain traits of character. Thus all the enemies of the Saracens belong to one family, all the rebellious vassals belong to another, all the traitors to a third, and so on. This tendency, which can be noticed, to a certain extent, even in Greek poetry, is a natural result of the feudal system, and it is so marked in the "*Chansons de Geste*" that it seems as if the old *trouvères* had discovered the principle of natural selection ages before Mr. Darwin made his appearance. But we may observe, besides, that when the more recent *trouvères* found a number of romances of southern origin, relating the wars of certain heroes against the Mohammedan invaders, who had conquered Provence and ravaged Languedoc, they naturally made these warriors members of the same class, and thus rendered materially perceptible the unity which one common theme gave to the poems. In like manner there existed another numerous class of metrical tales, all agreeing, despite differences of style and of minor points, in celebrating the union of the French nationality under the great emperor against the various enemies of the country. The central figure of these poems was, of course, Charlemagne himself, and all the heroes introduced were represented as connected together by genealogical ties, which, however, were not always consistent, or even probable. Finally, when, through the progress of the feudal element, the centralising tendency began to wane, and the royal power to lose its prestige, a third group of *gestes* arose, devoted to the service of the rebellious barons and to the glorification of feudalism. Such was the origin of the three cycles of metrical romances, which all constitute the great *ensemble* of the "*Chansons de Geste*." About the middle of the thirteenth century the *trouvère* to whom we are indebted for the metrical romance entitled "*Gérard de Vienne*," thus stated the classification we have just been describing: "There were only three *gestes* in happy France. The oldest was that of the King of France. The next one—and it is right that I should mention it—is that of Doon with the white beard—I mean Doon of Mayence, who had such power. The third family which did so many praiseworthy actions was that of the proud Garin de Monglaine."

The cycle of the king was, of course, naturally defined; nor could there be any difficulty about it. With reference to what we may call the Aquitaine

or Saracen group, we find that the expulsion of the Mohammedans from the south of France is represented as having been accomplished by one family of heroes—that of Garin de Monglaine. Lastly, the *geste* of Doon de Mayence, framed long after the two others, was made to include, somewhat haphazard, all the romances which could not logically be placed elsewhere. The fictitious genealogy ascribed to the chief character assigned to him

twelve sons and twelve daughters, thus bringing within the compass of one garland of stories all the personages who are supposed to represent the growing pretension of feudalism arrayed against the waning power of the monarchical element, personified in an effete and imbecile Charlemagne, far different from the great emperor of the "*Chanson de Roland*."

GUSTAVE MASSON.

ON THE RIVER AMAZONS.



MOUTH OF THE PURUS, TRIBUTARY OF THE AMAZON.

IN the whole region of the Amazons there is no spot of greater interest than Santarem. Having steamed up the river 450 miles, we sighted a range of dark green hills on the right bank, about fifteen miles distant. We kept close in shore to avoid the current flowing strongly farther out, and more than once the paddle-boxes brushed against the foliage of overhanging trees. The main river is here divided into three branches by two long islands, partly covered with cacao plantations, and as we gazed at the vast sea-like expanse of tumultuous yellow waters, here and there studded with patches of rank grass and trunks of trees, the latter often crowded with snowy aquatic fowl, our thoughts naturally turned westwards other 3,500 miles, where, amid the frowning granite gorges of the Andes brawled the head waters of the mighty stream upon which we rode. We came upon the mouth of the Tapajóz almost without warning, and a few minutes afterwards glided up the olive green waters of this magnificent tributary towards Santarem, the red-tiled, whitewashed houses of which faced the stream. Half an hour sufficed to bring us to our destination, the anchor dropped a short distance from the sandy beach, and putting our traps on board a stout canoe, manned by negroes, we were slowly paddled to land.

Santarem is laid out in three parallel avenues, crossed by streets at right angles. Most of the houses are of one storey, though a few belonging to the chief merchants are of two. Attached to several dwellings are flower-gardens, fenced with pointed stakes of hard wood, some containing splendid specimens of cocoa-nut, pupunha, and other palms. Doors and windows, in fact all kinds of woodwork, correspond in hue with the verdant sward clothing the streets. At the eastern end of the town stands a ruined stone

fortress upon a steep bluff, one hundred and twenty feet high, commanding the river approach; and, at the western extremity, a six-acre grass common, beyond which commences an Indian village, where the lower classes live in mud-walled shanties, thatched with palm leaf. The entire population may be estimated at 3,500 souls. Most of the shopkeepers are Portuguese, who retain their nationality to escape the occasional duties devolving upon good citizens, for which no remuneration is given beyond the thanks of the country; but there are several well-to-do Brazilians, whose wealth may be estimated in horses and cattle, slaves, and cacao plantations. Very primary education is administered to boys and girls in two schools; and there are numerous stores—one at the corner of every street nearly—where sharp Portuguese traders stand, in tucked-up shirt sleeves, vending strong white rum and slabs of evil-smelling cow flesh and pirarucú; this latter, with farinha (similar to the cassava of British Guiana), is the staple food of the country from the Atlantic to the Andes. A badly printed fortnightly newspaper, a foot square and only sixpence a number, furnishes a surprising quantum of scandal concerning non-subscribers; and people generally are so satisfied with the knowledge they possess, that there is not a bookseller's shop in the town. The chief articles of export are cacao, maize, rum, coffee, tobacco, and cattle. Between Itaituba—just below the falls—and Santarem, a large quantity of rubber, sarsaparilla, tonka beans, and copaíba oil is annually collected. English and American dry goods and hardware are brought from Pará, the port nearest the Atlantic.

Santarem is by no means a busy place. Just before daybreak male and female slaves turn out; coffee is put on to boil; cracked bells jangle for mass; bare-

footed female slaves stride with waterpot on head, and may be one under each arm; little negroes, half-breeds, and redskins carry round gourds filled with water; doors are thrown open, and people in easy circumstances sit in their hammocks, smoke a cigarette of Tauari, and after drinking a thimbleful of cashaça (raw spirit) or cup of coffee, prepare for the duties of the day. Breakfast is usually taken at eleven, dinner at sunset, and in the cool of the evening shopkeepers meet at each other's houses, and, weather permitting, sit on chairs in the street while their wives and daughters chat indoors. Party spirit runs high, Liberals avoid Conservatives, and the latter only deal with the former under pressure:

the best time for crossing these plains, on account of the oven-like heat caused by radiation during later hours of the day. They are said to extend from the Tapajóz to the Xingú, two strips of wood dividing them from the Amazons and the feet of table-lands which stretch a thousand miles southwards into the interior of Brazil. For a couple of miles is a gradual ascent along a winding track, through clumps of stunted trees, most of which have a list to south-west, caused by north-east winds. Immense ant-hills dot the open, and here abounds the wild cajú, from the fruit of which is manufactured a medicinal wine that promises to become an important article of export. The ground is partly covered with tufts of rank capim, or



AMAZONIAN FOREST.

Freemasons hate the High Church party; the priest solemnly declares the gates of heaven closed against members of all secret societies not sanctioned by the Church; and to hear Republicans talk, one would think wisdom their patrimony. The natives are fond of balls; and when a religious festival takes place—rarely a week passes without one—the slave population get up a dance too, and until the small hours of morning musical tailors and romantic haircutters parade the streets, playing popular airs upon the flute and guitar.

During the fifteen months this delectable spot was my headquarters, I made numerous excursions into the surrounding country, also across the plains into the forests beyond. In rear of the last avenue is a broad grassy space, containing some fine old tamarind-trees, backed by a thin belt of matted jungle, traversed by lanes of loose sand, emerging from which the Campos are entered. Early morning is

prairie grass, and when the plains are refreshed by rains after the scorching heats of the dry season, at which time the grass is fired, and a bright green crop sprouts into existence, it requires no great effort to imagine oneself in a pretty English park. Looking back from the first summit, the olive green waters of the Tapajóz assume a hue as cerulean as the Bay of Gibraltar, and away on the distant horizon a dark streak marks where dense forest resumes its sway. Towards the interior are isolated, conical, flat-topped hills, about three hundred feet high, composed of nodules of chocolate-coloured rock, almost as heavy as iron. They rise abruptly from a valley drained by rivulets that meander through leafy tunnels; and farther away are luxuriant forests the natives of Santarem have not cared or dared to explore, as practically unknown as when Columbus first trod the shores of the New World.

Skirting some of the jungle islets, I often stopped

to admire the picturesque grouping of trees, shrubs, and parasitical growth, and listen to the notes of feathered songsters that now and then resembled the warbling which gladdens our English woods; but more often the sounds are so strange and peculiar, they impart to the new comer a sense of dreary solitude. Clouds of tiny green parroquets flutter amid the foliage; gay woodpeckers strike hollow trunks with such force, it seems as though they must knock their little heads to pieces; one bird indefatigably pipes "Bem-te-vi," Portuguese for "I saw you well;" high overhead fly gorgeous scarlet and orange breasted macaws; cicadas make a deafening stridulation, and without intermission there is a hum, twitter, and buzz from countless insects that serve to keep us on the look-out for unsolicited attentions.

In the hollow of the valley, going towards the Indian village of Ypanema, a narrow brook sparkles over a white sandy bed. I had been told it was infested with *sucurujús*, or water boas (*Eunectes murinus*), but paid little attention, knowing native credulity and power of imagination. One morning, after crossing the plain alone, I sat to cool before drinking, and thought what a thing it would be if, while stooping for a draught, one of these scaly monsters were to wind round my body and cuddle me off to some shady retreat, where he could swallow me at leisure. While kneeling on a log, I tried to peer into the wall of parasitic growth about a yard distant, and just as my lips touched the water a tremendous splash and movement among the foliage caused me to spring to my feet and bound clear. Shortly afterwards an ugly anaconda was shot close by, and part of its skin, now in the writer's possession, measures nineteen feet in length and over a yard across. This reptile does not always hang suspended from the boughs of trees where beasts go to drink, but as often (and, I think, in preference) fastens its tail round a submerged trunk, with only the tip of its mouth visible above the surface. At the approach of a deer or pig, the head sinks, leaving a slight ripple, such as might be caused by a fish or insect; the moment the unsuspecting creature stoops to slake its thirst, out shoots the slimy serpent, throws a couple of folds round the body, thrusts its sharp fangs into the vertebrae of the neck, cracks its ribs by contraction, when death soon ensues; the carcass is then dragged away, swallowed entire at leisure, and a gluttonous surfeit slept off. These terrible reptiles abound in every igarapé (or narrow stream) and lake throughout Amazonia.

The second campo from Santarem is in some parts remarkably pretty. The soil is less sandy and darker, vegetation richer, and cattle fatten upon nutritious grass clothing expansive glades. Leaving a hill to the right, the crest of which resembles the ruins of an old castle, we rapidly descend, and entering a rift in the forest wall, are thankful for shelter from the blistering equatorial sun. Tree stems are higher, thicker, and smoother than the dwarf species of the plains. There is a greater wealth of epiphytal growth, and various kinds of palms lend additional attractions to the scene. The most conspicuous groupings of this large and beautiful family are composed of the curuá, a ground palm, with drooping pinnate fronds and long central spathe, used in thatching; bacába, with stately stem, and huge boughs spread out fan-shaped from the top; assai, a slender, delicate palm, surmounted by a bunch of dark violet berries, from which a delicious refresco is made; inajás, their ponderous boles almost hidden by exquisitely beauti-

ful ferns; and near lagunes of poisonous black water tower the jupatí, ubuçu, spinous-stemmed, languishing jauari, and colossal mirity palms. Fine lycopodiums carpet the track; the cipó matador holds trees in its deadly grip; air plants dangle from giddy heights, and now and then our nostrils are offended by foul exhalations from air shafts of formicaria, or relieved by the fragrance of unseen flowers. Immense morpho butterflies float lazily overhead on steel-blue wings, a span broad; locusts, somewhat the size and colour of a long marrowfat peapod, alight upon our clothes; beetles get into our beards; troops of monkeys chatter in the distance; pretty japim fly round their pendent nests, uttering plaintive cries; big-billed toucans hurry past in convoys; large ynambus rise with a loud flutter; and lizards, from a few inches in length to the spiny-backed iguana, a good yard long, scuttle across our path into undergrowth. Ant-hills are still common, and we frequently pass broad ruts, as though made by a wagon wheel, showing where saüba ants have been upon the march; indeed, these indefatigable workers are often seen each carrying a section of a leaf larger than its body, for the purpose, it is said, of lining the galleries of their dwellings.

After a mile and a half's ramble through this sylvan solitude, the aspect of vegetation materially changes. Undergrowth becomes thinner; ground palms more abundant; trees shoot up a prodigious height, some, such as the Brazil nut and capucaia, with lowest limbs fully one hundred feet from the ground; this last-mentioned tree yields a nut with a circular natural lid that opens as the fruit ripens. Some in the writer's possession are thirty inches in circumference. Upon hill slopes are numerous specimens of the assacú, the upas of Amazonia; its moss-covered stem is from one to two yards in diameter. One drop of the milk, which plentifully exudes upon making an incision, is said to be strong enough to kill a horse. Side by side with this deadly giant tower grand piquias, yielding an oily nut of a somewhat buttery taste; thus the same soil and same dew of heaven distil death in one tree and life-giving properties in another.

A capital view of the country below is obtained from a clearing skirting the edge of the tableland. The vertical sun deluges the verdant ocean at our feet with a flood of brilliant light. Here and there enormous domes rise above the surrounding level, resembling so many islands; isolated hills are seen clothed with grass and shrubs to their summits; beyond the forest stretch the hot plains; overhead scud thin heat-clouds of white vapour, and away in the distance flows the majestic yellow Amazon and a part of its emerald tributary, where it measures some fourteen miles across.

The mind is oppressed with a sense of the magnitude of this tropical wilderness, for our European woods dwindle into insignificance compared with the two million three hundred thousand English square miles of forest which robs the Valley of the Amazons. Its immensity inspires awe, admiration, praise, and thanksgiving, for He who hath made everything beautiful has surely some great and blessed purpose in preparing during long lapse of time such unrivalled vegetable wealth. It may be taken for granted that every year there falls to the ground enough of the hardest, rarest, and most beautiful fragrant cabinet woods to decorate the houses and palaces of the wealthy throughout the world, and probably the

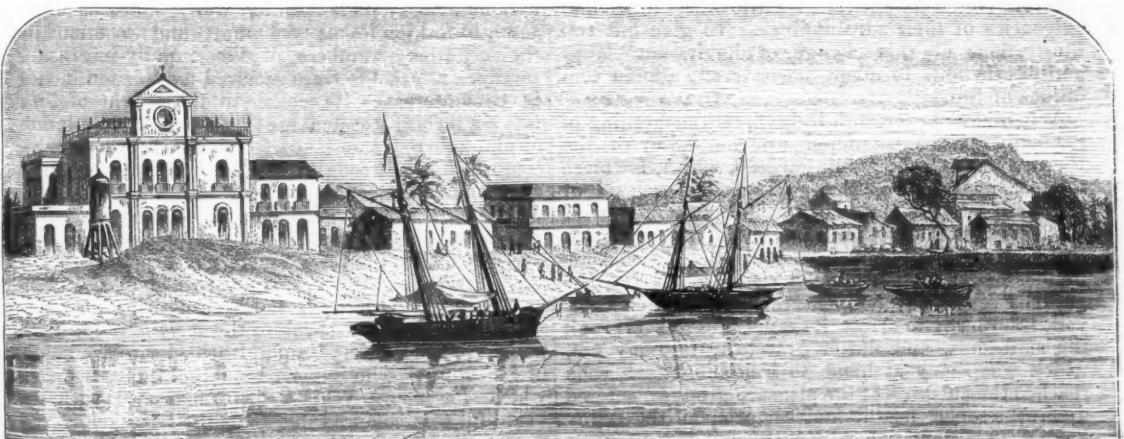
time is not far distant when newly-discovered medicinal properties of plants, barks, and roots will materially alter our modern pharmacopœia. With proper agricultural appliances, the sooty soil might procure a succession of crops of tropical produce, and teeming millions, with little exertion, find ample means of comfortable subsistence. There is this proviso, however, always supposing immigrants could stand the climate. Excepting the Portuguese, ninety per cent. of European colonists succumb to fever, bad food, or else leave for more congenial climes.

Then again, think of the generations of red men who have passed away, and of whom we know nothing. At the edge of the table-land, in black soil, at a depth of between two and three feet, are occasionally found pieces of rude pottery, resembling the Egyptian scarabæus, lizard, alligator, and head of condor, though I believe this bird is never seen so far east from the Andes; and upon one occasion I saw a seated figure, about seven inches high, almost identically the shape of a Budh image. Who formed these articles? From whence did they come? What was their language and religion? We can but surmise! Then, again, what of the tribes known to exist between the Atlantic and the Andes, many of whom are nude, painted savages, without any knowledge of elementary civilisation, who have never seen a white man, or heard the sound of the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ? But we cannot linger longer, seeing we have but time to peep into the virgin woods, and truly the sight repays our trouble of cutting through undergrowth with long sabre knives. Here are juthahys, with buttresses that spring from their trunks as much as sixty feet from the ground. Upon the branches of cedars cluster hundreds of choice orchids. Countless bush ropes, from the thickness of twine to that of a man-of-war's cable, hang from highest boughs. Some trees are disfigured by chocolate-coloured ants' nests; from the sides of others stand flat pieces of woody fungus. Myrtles, laurels, bigonias, mimosas, and splendid ferns are massed in picturesque groups, certain sections being draped and festooned by luxuriant parasites, and there the passion flower flings broadcast its crimson and violet blossoms, while other delicate plants weave a thou-

sand fantastic garlands, beautifully spangled with blooming gems. Bright humming-birds flit to and fro, sipping nectar on poised wing; insects of every conceivable hue and species bewilder with variety and noise; birds whistle, cry, shriek, and scream; monkeys howl and chatter; globose nuts and ponderous woody beans fall with heavy thud, and amid the combination of strange, weird sounds, we hear the crash of some monarch of the forest that, after flourishing for centuries, tumbles to enrich the soil which gave it life.

Having a long walk home, we turn down hill, stroll gently through the woods, and, after a drink and a few minutes' rest at the brook before mentioned, plod across the loose sandy plains towards Santarem. As the sun sinks in the far west, stars simultaneously twinkle in the east. A variety of night birds now begin to flit to and fro, one boldly settling upon the track and allowing us to approach within a few feet before rising. Directly we reach home, doors and windows—without glass—are opened to obtain relief from the sickening heat, and we are thankful to hear the wind rustling among cocoa-nut fronds opposite, for we know it heralds a storm. Dark clouds soon speed overhead; gusts of wind sweep through the streets; the sluggish *Tapajós* is troubled with dangerous waves; the heavens become obscured, vivid flashes of lightning accompanied by sharp reports follow in quick succession; a deluge of rain creates such an uproar conversation is impossible, and we dodge streams trickling from the roof. The storm over and candles lit, big brown cockroaches come from nobody knows where, and seem to have a special fancy for one's neck; juvenile bats skim round the room while their anxious mammas keep up a shrill kissing sound; degraded pigs with no twist in their tails grunt in search of garbage; dogs "delight to bark and bite;" loose horses gallop up and down avenues; enthusiastic musicians commence their rambles; night birds utter plaintive cries and moans; insects chirp, twitter, and hum; and when the grateful cool atmosphere descends, all wise persons stretch themselves across their hammocks as much as possible (usually slung in room corners), and endeavour to go to sleep to rise refreshed for the duties of another sweltering day.

R. S. CLOUGH.



SANTAREM.

ANTS.

"A LITTLE PEOPLE," BUT "EXCEEDING WISE."

BY THE REV. W. FARREN WHITE, M.A., VICAR OF STONEHOUSE, GLOUCESTERSHIRE.

XI.—MORE ABOUT THEIR HOMES AND OCCUPATIONS.

WE have noticed in a previous paper while investigating the domestic arrangements of *F. sanguinea*, how its mansion is sometimes transformed into an hotel, this enterprising ant, with the help of its sable dependents, offering accommodation to many other species, who seem well satisfied with their comfortable quarters. I should have you know that *F. rufa* takes in lodgers also. I have already called attention to the presence of a small party of *F. flava* in the commodious domicile of *F. rufa* in the valley of the Horner. You must know that a very distinct species of ant, pale-reddish, smooth and shining, is found in the nests of *F. rufa* and *F. congerens*. I have only heard of its being discovered in association with *F. rufa* in this country. They have been found in the nests of *F. rufa* in some abundance at Weybridge. The name of the species is *Myrmica*, or *Stenamma Westwoodii*. I have already referred to the rare ant, *Myrmica*, or *Tetramoria lippula*, which I found at Lynmouth last year, and many years before, when I first began my researches, in a nest of *F. umbrata* at Charlton, Kent. Others have found it in association with the jet ant (*F. fuliginosa*). I would have you know that the jet ant is both a carpenter and wood-carver. It fashions the chambers and colonnades of its beautiful habitation in the heart of forest-trees. I have already mentioned having found a strong colony established in an oak on Hampstead Heath. You should know that it sometimes departs from its usual habit and arranges its many-chambered home in the ground.

I have this year discovered extensive colonies of this species following the trade of a miner in the pleasant copses at Clevedon. It should be noted that when established in a tree, its carved work is always stained black, and I have noticed that when prepared for the cabinet a dark stain is left upon the card on which it is extended. The perfume of this ant is most agreeable, similar to the fragrance of the brilliant and long-horned musk-beetle. I have to mention that other species adapt themselves to circumstances and change their trade to meet the peculiar exigencies of their surroundings. To give but two illustrations of this change of habit and happy aptitude in ants to adapt themselves to altered conditions of life.

When at Bournemouth in 1876, on the morning of September 1st, I sauntered up the valley of the Bourne, through the public gardens, which, for more than one and a half miles, are arranged on each side of the sparkling stream, and tastefully planted with rhododendron and other shrubs and plants which luxuriate in the peaty soil. The flaming tritoma was in blossom, and the crimson cistus also made the gardens gay, and tempted the brilliant clouded-yellow butterfly to arrest its rapid progress through the sunbeams, and flutter gracefully into my net, which was ready at hand to welcome it. I soon reached the outskirts of the pleasure-grounds, entered upon the open heath, and came upon the sunny bank near the spot where I discovered the extensive and interesting colony of *F. congerens*. I was watching the little people busily employed in putting up their

shutters, when my attention was attracted by an old Scotch fir stump in the midst of the purple heath, golden gorse, and antlered fern. I removed some of the bark, and, to my delight, I discovered the common garden ant (*F. nigra*) in full force, which, though usually a miner, was here following most intelligently the trade of a wood-carver. Passages and chambers innumerable were wrought most skillfully in the wood, which, though firm, was in some places somewhat soft, and bordering on decay. There were many nurseries crowded with larvae. My wife sketched the picturesque stump, and before the work of art was completed, every larva had been removed by the careful and indefatigable nurses. I should state that the girth of the top of the stump was thirty inches, that the height above ground was twelve inches, and the extent of the chambers exposed was twenty-four inches, and hundreds of larvae were reposing snugly in their nurseries. I had removed the greater part of the stump with the aid of spade, chisel, mallet, and the willing shoulder of a stalwart labourer, to my lodgings, whence it was in due course transported to my Vicarage study, and as I write I can plainly see and admire the skilful work of the little wood-carvers.

Again, *F. umbrata*, as a rule, is found following the occupation of a miner. It was so with the colony I found at Charlton, and with that which has flourished for years in my Vicarage garden. Last year, however, when cutting down what was once a magnificent willow adorning my paddock, but which for the last year or so had been gradually losing its beauty and hastening to decay, I was astonished at discovering in the very heart of the tree a strong colony of *F. umbrata*. It was here occupied as a carpenter as well as a miner. The work of destruction had been commenced, I believe, by a wood-boring beetle, but had been effectually continued and well-nigh completed by the little people, who had shown their wisdom in utilising the decaying wood and fine comminuted particles, which it had doubtless accumulated by its mandibles, which acted as sharp saws, to fashion its many chambers and accommodate the countless numbers of the rapidly-increasing family. In fact, the tree measured ten feet ten inches in circumference; its centre, to the height of four feet six inches, was tenanted by a formic population of unnumbered thousands. The rich brown honey-combed, finely-wrought, woody material occupied a space of about one foot four inches in diameter. But what is more remarkable, the same year, 1878, was memorable in that I was happy enough to discover *F. umbrata* to be not merely a carpenter, but a wood-carver, and a workman as skilled in his craft as the famous jet ant. I had been noticing for some little time that a fine shrub of the *Weigela rosea*, indigenous to the Flowery Land, identified with the name of "Fortune," who imported it into this country, and which for many years had ornamented with its beautiful rose-coloured blossoms the left side of my dining-room window, had been for a while languishing until almost all the branches had perished, and most reluctantly I had to give orders for it to be cut

down and uprooted; what was my astonishment to find, when the stock was split open, that *F. umbrata* had made it its residence, and most beautifully had the hard wood been chiseled into numerous chambers and corridors. I have it now before me, and I can count as many as twelve different storeys to this exquisitely-fashioned formic mansion. The ceiling of one chamber forms the floor of the next, and the passages are so constructed as to give perfect access to the different chambers, and at the same time to occupy as little space as possible, so that the wants of the increasing colony may be most economically, yet perfectly, provided for.

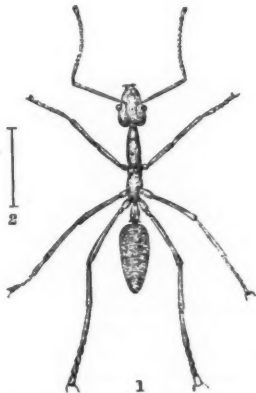
THE FOREIGN PLASTERERS AND TENT-MAKERS.

Though I am really giving an account of the British ant-world, I cannot forbear referring to two foreign species which are abundantly represented in my collection, and specimens of whose architectural skill I have also in my possession. Both I have received from Sierra Leone by a friend, the Rev. J. Hamilton who for so many years laboured faithfully and successfully to further the missionary enterprise in that inclement colony. One of the species is a plasterer and the other a tent-maker.



Nest of *Formica virescens* (*Ecophylla*), on Mango-tree.—1 nat. size.

The plasterer belongs to the genus *Crematogaster*,

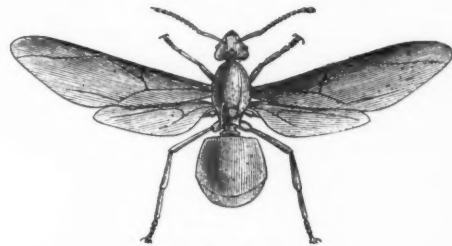


1. *Formica virescens*, larger worker (*Ecophylla*). 2. Natural size.

which walks with its abdomen over its thorax, hence the name, and makes its nests in trees, of laminae of manure or prepared earth. The nest is of a dark-brown colour, and of a spherical form, and has, as I have mentioned, acquired the name of the negro-head, on account of its marked resemblance to the woolly hair of our sable brother. In the Brazils it generally goes by this cognomen.

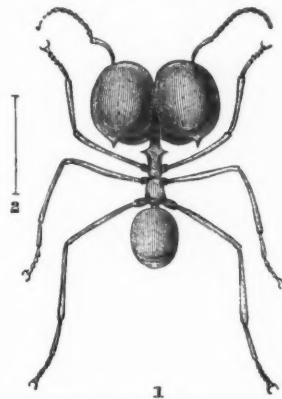
The tent-maker is the *Formica virescens* of Africa and Australia. It is also called *Ecophylla*, and most appropriately, too, since it forms its nest of leaves, by drawing them together and keeping them in true position by means of a fine web. I have a fine series of each order of the colony from Sierra Leone: the large females, the small males, and the larger and smaller workers. I have many of the commodious tents of this clever artificer.

THE UMBRELLA ANT OF BRAZIL.



Umbrella Ant; female.

The umbrella ant of Brazil, *Ecodoma cephalotes*, should not be passed over. It thatches its house with circular bits of leaf cut with accurate precision from coffee and orange trees, which they oftentimes



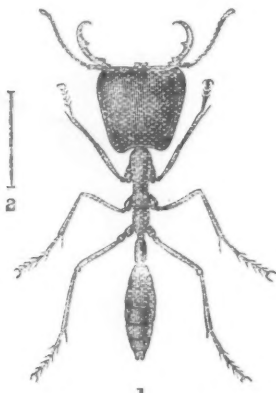
1. Umbrella Ant. 2. Natural size.

defoliate to carry out their bold architectural designs, their mansions being sometimes forty or fifty yards in circumference, though only two feet in height. This enterprising tribe of the little people are wont to carry each a piece of leaf in an upright position, apparently utilising their burden as an umbrella or parasol to shield themselves from the burning heat of the tropical sun. When numbers of these wondrous ants walk in procession with their little umbrellas a very grotesque effect is produced. I have conversed with a gentleman who graphically described these ants at work upon their umbrellas. In their preparation they observe a division of labour. While some of the little workers are in the trees cutting the little circles from the leaves, their com-

panions are below waiting for the tiny umbrellas to fall that they may pick them up and carry them to their homes. These little people are civil engineers as well as architects, excavating as they do a tunnel under wide and rapid rivers as broad as the Thames at London Bridge, their triumphs of engineering skill having been executed long before such subfluvial thoroughfares were even heard of by the human family.

THE WANDERING DRIVER ANT OF AFRICA.

Neither would it be right to pass over without notice the driver ants of Africa, *Anomma*, who are totally blind, and whose sting is said to be like the puncture of a red-hot needle, who, like the Arabs of the desert, have no certain dwelling-place. These are



1. Driver Ant.

2. Natural size.

truly the scavengers of the deserts, before whom rats, mice, lizards, cockroaches, and every kind of vermin

fly in terror, but are soon overpowered and destroyed—before whose deadly advance the largest serpent is driven, and if gorged, soon falls a victim to its countless hordes, in whose presence horses and mules become unmanageable. On occasion of their visit families have to leave their houses, only to return and find their visitors their greatest friends, being as they are the certain death of every noxious and unclean intruder within the sacred domestic precincts. Before the dauntless and determined progress of these driver ants every obstacle is overcome, every difficulty vanishes—onwards, still onwards, is their motto. In their blind career they pass through houses, over hill and dale, and across water—and how? Not simply like the little sugar-ant, which passes over the floating mass of the bodies of its companions who have accidentally fallen into the tiny trench which environs the food it is intended to preserve from their attack; such a method would be simply impracticable where running streams and rapid torrents have to be crossed. They actually link themselves together until the living chain reaches a length equal to the breadth of the stream, and thus form a floating bridge more marvellous than the bridge of boats across the Rhine, and over which the serried ranks of their resistless army passes. Over rapid torrents this would not be possible. So in this case an animated suspension-bridge is formed, more astonishing in its construction than that which spans the Menai Straits, or that at Clifton, which gracefully connects the opposite shores of the River Avon. This bridge, as in the former case, is formed of the living bodies of some of the countless legions of this valiant and triumphant little people, one end being fastened to an overhanging branch, while the other, assisted by a friendly breeze, is wafted to the opposite shore of the brawling waters, and there safely and securely anchored for the benefit of the passing crowd.

THE CITY: ITS CORPORATION AND ITS GUILDS.

II.

THE Corporation of London owes not a little of its strength, and honour, and vitality to the City guilds, of which there are some eighty in all, and of which some—the Needle-makers, to wit—have been resuscitated in our day. Admission into the body of Freemen is by birth, apprenticeship, purchase, or gift, into the Livery by fees varying from a few pounds up to two hundred guineas. Some of the guilds have quite a political character. In London and the suburbs they own much property, and, besides, they have estates extending far and wide. In Ireland alone it is estimated that they hold three hundred thousand acres of land. At one time monarchs fleeced them on a right royal scale, but they have gone on flourishing, nevertheless, and are a most powerful ingredient in City life. The City Companies possess also a large amount of patronage, such as scholarships at the Universities, masterships of grammar schools, and livings in the Church. But, perhaps, their most useful charitable work is lending money to young beginners in their respective trades, or relieving the necessities of their poorer members. Strong in their wealth and antiquity, they are a link between the present and the past. In their ancient halls are guarded treasures rich and rare. Kings and queens

have been proud to be admitted to their banquets, and in their rolls of members may be seen the names of the most distinguished statesmen of our own or other lands. They give richly to good works. We owe much to them, even granting that they have not done all that they might for the greatness of the city or the welfare of the people. It is probable that the inquiry recently instituted will stimulate some necessary reforms.

Originally, the tradesmen of London constituted one collective trading company. At what period trade guilds were first formed is uncertain. It is said they were unknown to the Saxons. They were not generally incorporated till the reign of Edward III, who became a Merchant Taylor.

A few sessions since a return was obtained of the ancient oaths and modern declarations to be made by masters, assistants, freemen, clerks, and officers of the City Companies. Twenty-four of them exercised their rights, and refused to comply with the order. The modern declaration has been substituted for the ancient; but as regards thirty-one of them, it appears that the oaths and declarations made by the masters and wardens, as also those made by the other officers, are in most cases very similar in terms.

They pledge the holder of the office to loyalty to Queen and Company, to a faithful and impartial execution of the duties of his office, to the maintenance of the rights and the enforcement of the ordinances and rules of the Company, to strict secrecy as to its affairs, and to a faithful stewardship of the plate, money, jewels, rents, goods, etc., for the time being entrusted to his care. Some of the oaths and declarations require the performance of duties which, it is to be believed, as regards most of the members, have long been in abeyance. The briefest declaration required is that of the Coopers' Company.

The Drapers' Company exacts from its masters and wardens a declaration against transubstantiation, and they are also to preface their promise to discharge the duties of their respective offices with a formal repudiation of Papal or other foreign jurisdiction within this realm. The clerk and beadle must further declare: "Also I will not open or disclose any words which any brother of this said Company, perchance, in heat of blood, shall speak in my hearing to the rebuke, reproach, disproof, check, or in derision of any brother being absent." These oaths fully account for the secrecy which is observed in all matters where the City guilds are concerned. For instance, the clerk of the Drapers' Company must solemnly protest: "I will not convey nor carry, nor suffer to be conveyed or carried, out of this house any book or books, evidences, writings, or muniments pertaining to the same, or any copies thereof, to show, or read, or to be shown or read to any person or persons, nor deliver out of this house any abstract or copy of any ordinance, act, or decree, without licence of the master, or one of the wardens for the time being, and all other matters as concerning the Corporation of this fellowship, or the land, rent, residences, muniments, money, jewels, or plate, for the profit of the same fellowship, I will conceal and keep secret."

The Merchant Taylors are required to be very firm when the foreigner deals in merchandise in the City, and to give due notice to the chamberlain of the same. One clerk has to exercise his righteous soul "in the reformation of abuses, or regulation of refractory or disorderly persons." The freemen of the Framework Knitters' Company promise "not to use any fraud in the matter of framework knitting." The goldsmith solemnly declares that he will faithfully observe and keep all the laws of this realm "which relate to the manufacture of gold and silver plate, and will warn the wardens of every deceit in anything that belongeth to the craft of goldsmiths which shall come to his knowledge." The oaths of the Innholders date from 1667, and still retain their quaint phraseology. The master, and the wardens, and the commonalties are to disclose to the magistrates the names of such dangerous and suspicious persons as may resort to their houses or the houses of any of the society. The ostler, in addition to his other pledges, must swear to inform against his master if he use "any substitute or crafty demeanour in his weights, measures, or lodgings, contrary to the orders of this society;" and moreover, continues the oath, "if you have knowledge and intelligence of any felons, murderers, or any other suspicious persons resorting to your master's house, or to the house of any other of the said societie; and you shall not wittingly or willingly receive, harbour, or chield any theife, robber, or other suspicious persons. You shall not be of counsell with any theife, robber, or other persons for the sellinge of any robbery or dooinge of any

violence, thefts, or fraud to any person, nor shall know the like intended by any without disclosing the same either to your own master with whom you serve, or to the master and wardens for the time being of Innholders, to the intente that it may be described to some magistrate." The Mercers' Company require of the master of the candidate a declaration to the effect that he served him faithfully, not colourably, that he has not traded for himself, or committed matrimony during his term of servitude. Real usefulness then was evidently the aim of a City guild.

These City guilds were, to a large extent, charitable institutions. For instance, any members of the Grocers' Company becoming poor "from adventures on the sea, or from advanced prices of merchandise, or by burning and pledging, or by any other misfortunes, might, by ordinations of the Wardens and Company, be assisted out of the common money, according to his situation, if he could not do without." It was thus that the Companies were led to build asylums for the benefit of their aged members, which are now mostly placed in pleasant places—as, for instance, the Whittington Almshouses, at the foot of Highgate Archway. In most of the Companies the children of the liverymen are educated, and sometimes boarded, more or less gratuitously; and besides there are pensions for the persons qualified to receive them. In these charities they are as much distinguished as ever—perhaps more so, in consequence of the enormous increase in value of their property. It might have been well if the guilds had been equally attentive to the discharge of other duties.

The ordinances of the Grocers, who were the chemists and druggists of earlier times, enjoined on the wardens "to go and assayen weights, powders, confections, plasters, ointments, and all other thynges belonging to the same crafte." The other guilds had similar duties. The Merchant Taylors have a silver yard for the measurement of cloth. On the eve of St. Bartholomew fit persons were appointed to see that the proper measure was used, and in 1566 we find one Pullen to have been committed by the Court to prison for using an unlawful yard found in his shop at the time of search. The Grocers, as was to be expected, seem to have been constantly finding out and punishing frauds. Amongst other duties the Fishmongers had to see that no one watered their fish exposed to sale twice, or sold what was bad. In like manner the Goldsmiths had the assay of metals, and the Vintners the tasting and gauging of wines, and so on; and the Bakers had to look after the bread. In old London, it is evident, there was no better institution than that of the City guild. Its aim was to put down dishonest men, to uphold the privileges of trade, to see that the trader was not a scamp, that the customer got his money's worth, and to take care of the widow and the fatherless and the poor.

The seventy-six great and small Livery Companies or guilds of the City of London contain in their list of freemen the Prince of Wales, the Dukes of Connaught, Edinburgh, and Cambridge, and many of the distinguished men of the times. Messrs. Gladstone and Lowe are Fishmongers; the Marquis of Lorne is a Grocer; Lord Beaconsfield is a Merchant Taylor; Sir Robert Lush is a Currier; the late Ward Hunt was a Felt-maker; Mr. Ayrton a Leather-seller; ten clergymen, including

a bishop, are Drapers, Mercers, and Haberdashers; Mr. Goschen and Sir Thomas Chambers are Spectacle-makers. Among the Turners are Sir Bartle Frere, Sir Samuel Baker, Mr. John MacGregor, Sir William Armstrong, and others well known. Sir George Elliot and Sir Charles Bright are Needle-makers; Lord Selborne was Prime Warden of the Mercers' Company; Mr. Digby Seymour is a Plumber; Mr. Hardinge Giffard a Sadler; Sir Richard Wallace is a Coach-maker. As such they have City votes and civic privileges, and there is no doubt that thus the basis of the too narrow Corporation is widened and strengthened. Many of the Companies have funds left them for special purposes, as the Patten Makers, who dine together on Lord Mayor's Day in consequence of a bequest to that effect. Thus it is that people outside the City, people in every part of England, are more or less connected with the Corporation of London.

Undoubtedly in many respects the Companies have drifted not a little from their moorings. A member of the Grocers' Company, for instance, is not necessarily a grocer. But this has not been the case to the extent sometimes asserted. The Stationers are stationers, though the public are admitted to their excellent school in Bolt Court. And the Brewers are managed by the leaders of the brewing craft. A year or two since the Shipwrights' Company inaugurated an Exhibition of Ships' Models. Many of the guilds, such as the Coach-makers, devote a portion of their funds to technical education, and there is every reason to believe that the example thus set will be increasingly followed. That the guilds are not mainly composed of members of the craft whose name they bear, seems not to be their fault. In his work on London, Mr. Serjeant Pulling, discussing this question, writes: "It may admit of considerable doubt whether every tradesman within London has not still an incorporate right to be admitted as a member of that particular Company having a superintendence over his own trade. These Companies are not voluntary societies, consisting of persons chosen by voluntary consent, nor can the admission of members, as in the Corporations at large, be considered to be settled by prescription and confined to persons possessed of particular qualifications, as apprenticeship or patrimony. On the contrary, the charters of all incorporated Companies expressly state them to be composed of the working members of the different trades or mysteries which they represent, and further, in many instances, require all persons in such trades within certain limits to become members thereof." It is further urged "that the long immunity from interference enjoyed by the City Companies has resulted from negligence of their own interests on the part of London tradesmen."

The wealth of the Companies is not easily estimated. The Goldsmiths are said to have spent £30,000 a year in banquets. Their hall alone, it is calculated, would produce a rental of £10,000 a year. When the Drapers' Company lately cut up the garden behind their beautiful hall in Throgmorton Street it was calculated that, as building ground, it was worth a million of pounds. On the building of this hall the Drapers spent as much as £74,000. On house rent and taxes, etc., Mr. Gilbert calculates that the Guilds spent as much as £100,000 a year. In a paper read by Mr. James, M.P., at the Social Science Congress at Liverpool he stated

that these guilds at the present time possess real property in London alone to the amount of £450,000 annual value. He quoted also the balance-sheet of the Joiners' Company for the year 1875—a Company, be it remembered, that possesses no hall. To the debtor's side were rents, £1,150; dividend, £100; freedom of the City, £150; new Liverymen, £850; total, £2,250. On the creditor's side, dinners and festivities, £700; investment, £560; salaries, £130; court livery fees, £200; sundries, £200; pensions and charitable donations, £120 (Oh, monstrous! what a halfpennyworth of bread to all that sack); balance, £170. If the other Companies act in a similar manner, it is evident that there is a good deal of needless eating and drinking. But the guilds are wise in their generation, and thus it is that they make friends of the mammon of unrighteousness. You cannot abuse a man after you have eaten his salt, much less partaken of City feasts.

J. E. R.

FRENCH PROTECTORATE IN THE PACIFIC.

THE annexation of Tahiti and its dependencies is at length an accomplished fact. In reality, the French have been rulers of Tahiti ever since Admiral Thouars, in 1842, sought a quarrel with Queen Pomare, and the acceptance of the "Protectorate" was formally sanctioned by Louis Philippe. The honour of England was nominally vindicated by Lord Palmerston insisting on the "Prichard Indemnité"—a concession so unpopular in France as nearly to cause a war. The soreness lasted long, and M. Thiers made crafty use of it to damage his rival Guizot in popular estimation.

At length, in 1847, a treaty was signed by Lord Palmerston and Count Jarnac, on behalf of the two Governments, of which the first clause was an engagement to recognise the independence of Huahine, Raiatea, Borabora, and the adjacent islands. The second clause promised never to assume, under the name of Protectorate, or any other form whatever, the possession of the Leeward Islands.

The text of this treaty was reprinted in the "Times" of September 10th, in a letter from Mr. John Findlay, formerly residing in Tahiti.

It appears that the French have not only formally annexed Tahiti, but have cajoled the people of Raiatea and other islands to accept their flag. Other groups will be swallowed up, if this treaty is to be set at naught. French rule in these seas means the extension of popery, and treading out the evangelical missions which have done so much for these islands. It means, also, a check to English commerce and to British influence in the Pacific.

POPULATION OF THE WORLD.—The total population of the world, according to the estimate of MM. Behm and Wagner, is as follows:—

Europe	315,929,000
Asia	834,707,000
Africa	205,679,000
America	95,495,500
Australia and Polynesia	4,031,000
Polar regions	82,000

The world..... 1,455,923,500

The increase since the last estimate of these eminent statisticians, nineteen months before, is supposed to be 16,778,200, so that the population of the world increases nearly 29,450 a day.

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THE



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DECEMBER, 1880.

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ALMANACK FOR

DECEMBER, 1880.

1 W	☾ rises 7.47 A.M.	9 T	☾ rises 7.57 A.M.	17 F	☾ rises 8.4 A.M.	25 S	CHRISTMAS DAY
2 T	New ☾ 2.56 A.M.	10 F	Jupiter near ☽	18 S	☽ great. dist. from ☾	26 S	1 S. AF. CHRISTMAS
3 F	☽ least dis. from ☾	11 S	Twilight c. 5.55 P.M.	19 S	4 SUN. IN ADVENT	27 M	☾ rises 8.8 A.M.
4 S	Clock af. ☾ 9m. 23s.	12 S	3 SUN. IN ADVENT	20 M	Daybreak 6 A.M.	28 T	☾ Clk. bef. ☾ 2m. 4s.
5 M	2 SUN. IN ADVENT	13 M	Jupiter an evn. str.	21 T	Winter Quar. begs.	29 W	Taurus S. 10 P.M.
6 M	Venus an evn. star	14 T	Orion S. at midght	22 W	Saturn an evn. star	30 T	☾ sets 3.57 P.M.
7 T	☾ sets 3.49 P.M.	15 W	☾ sets 3.49 P.M.	23 T	☾ sets 3.52 P.M.	31 F	New ☾ 1.56 P.M.
8 W	☽ 1 Qr. 6 38 P.M.	16 T	☽ full and eclipsed	24 F	☽ 3 Quar. 6.57 P.M.		(Ecl. of ☽ 1.40 P.M.)

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